

443 house). The municipal markets of the Recôncavo have a highly institutionalized character supported by long tradition. There have been [178] very few modifications in the local marketing system either to accept new products or to incorporate new techniques. Despite their highly institutionalized character, markets serve to accommodate and to re-enforce and stabilize the basic personal relationships between buyer and seller. Thus it is both difficult and misleading to approach marketing from a purely economic point of view.

Weekly markets (feiras) are held in every villa and cidade of the Recôncavo. Each of these feiras has a specified day and location. Usually the market of the cidade will be held on a different day than those of the villas of the locality, and usually adjacent idades have their markets on different days. This arrangement facilitates the marketing of surplus products and makes it possible for itinerant buyers and sellers to travel from feira to feira. The market place [366] of most idades and of the larger villas includes a public building and the adjacent streets, and in some cases, a corral. Usually the [347] market building itself is a large shed with open windows and doors, earthen or concrete floor, and no internal divisions except those provided by the pillars which support the roof. Stalls are sometimes provided in the newer or more pretentious buildings, but this is exceptional. Generally the market is located on a main square or a principal street. On the day of the feira, market activities expand beyond the main buildings and onto the streets, covering an area of about one city block in a typical center.

Participation in the feira is practically universal--the rural areas of the município, or the distrito if it is a villa market, are half emptied on market day. At sunrise or even earlier the farm families, or sometimes only the farmer, his wife, or child, begin

mers. However, on almost every plantation there are brick-lined springs from which the inhabitants get their drinking water. Women or children carrying five-gallon cans of water on their heads, and donkeys carrying four wooden kegs of water, are common sights along the roads of the Recôncavo. For the cattle and other livestock of the plantations, drinking places are excavated wherever there promises to be enough water. Frequently, however, these go dry in the summer, especially during the drought years which occur cyclically in rhythm with the droughts of the sertão. At such times loss of cattle is prevalent, except on plantations situated near one of the small rivers.

A high-voltage electric line passes through this section leading from the generating station further inland to the capital city. Recently most of the plantations have been able to connect with this line, so that at least the owners' houses have electric light. The houses of the workers are without it except at the factory, where the mill supplies its own electric power which is carried to almost all the workers' houses.

There are four state schools and one county school distributed among the plantations. The central school in the town of Vila Recôncavo is not attended by children from the plantations. Two plantations have their own chapels, which are visited at irregular intervals by the priests of Vila Recôncavo. On the other plantations a small altar is set up in the owner's house for special occasions such as Christmas, when the town priest is invited to celebrate the Mass.

There is in the town a medical post with a visiting doctor, a dentist, and several nurses in training, which is administered by a Franciscan lay brother and supported by federal, state, and county funds and by private donations. This post is fairly recent, and its influences are spreading only slowly to the rural area. Also in the town is a small county medical post run by a resident physician. The sugar factory has a dispensary with a nurse and is visited by the town doctor. Almost every plantation has its own first-aid equipment, generally in the owner's house.

There are no fairs in the community. There are stores in the town and a large supply store at the factory, run by the corporation, and nearly every plantation has its own small store. Major purchases are made at the weekly market in Centro, in the neighboring county. There are also traveling ped-